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ABSTRACT

This study investigated how Japanese telephone closings were realized between intimates with regard to pre-closing, terminal exchange, and leave-taking. Participants were native speakers of Japanese living in the United States who were calling other native Japanese speakers overseas. Researchers audiotaped the international telephone calls. Results indicated that the three features of Japanese telephone closing (pre-closing, terminal exchange, and leave-taking) represented key phases in the closing process. There were preferable and frequently used patterns in each of the three phases. Participants used strategies in each of the three phases that stood out notably. In all of the phases, speakers seemed to cooperate not only to finish the conversation but also to not threaten each other's face. The results suggest that closing a telephone conversation is a delicate and complicated process, even to speakers in close relationships. Closing was a crucial speech behavior, since it not only served to end the conversation but also acted as a confirmation of the interlocutors' relationships. (Contains 22 references.) (SM)

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Although all conversations, once they are started, must end, the way in which termination and parting is achieved varies within and across cultures. Closing a conversation is a face-threatening act, in which interlocutors cooperate to maintain face, according to the politeness theory proposed by Brown and Levinson (1987). Recognition of the importance of teaching the norms of interaction, including closing telephone conversations, to language learners who want to acquire communicative competence urges further empirical research (Wolfson 1983b; 1989). Japanese closing of the telephone conversation, however, has not been explored fully to help language teachers understand the norms, and it is often overlooked in pedagogical practice. By employing quantitative discourse analysis using the constituents argued by Okamoto (1991), this study examines how Japanese telephone closings are realized between intimates with three phases of the closing section: namely, 1) pre-closing, 2) terminal exchanges, and 3) leave-taking. The findings of this study show that there are preferable and frequently used patterns in each of the three phases, and that closing is a crucial speech behavior since it serves not only to end a conversation but also acts as a confirmation of the interlocutors' relationships. This study encourages more empirical research so that language learners can understand the norms of closing telephone conversations in Japanese.

Introduction

Although all conversations, once they are started, must end, the way in which termination and parting is achieved varies within and across cultures. Conversations could be finished sometimes because of external situational reasons, such as having to stop a conversation on a bus because one of the interlocutors needs to get off or having to stop a conversation before the class when a teacher enters the room. However, in many situations, closing the conversation is not simply a matter of a speaker saying that he or she wants to stop the conversation. Moreover, ending conversations can be a delicate matter because it can mean a sort of parting that may offend the other interlocutor if not performed appropriately. Therefore, some type of culturally appropriate closing technique is

needed.

We may understand what ending a conversation means by considering the politeness theories of Brown and Levinson (1987). Brown and Levinson explain speech behaviors employing the notion of face. Their definition of face is the following:

> [Face is tied up]...with the notion of being embarrassed or humiliated, or 'losing face.' Thus face is something that is emotionally invested, and that can be lost, maintained, or enhanced, and must be constantly attended to in interaction. In general, people cooperate (and assume each other's cooperation) in maintaining face in interaction, such cooperation being based on the mutual vulnerability of face (61).

One type of face is called positive face, which is "the positive consistent self-image or 'personality' (crucially including the desire that the self-image be appreciated and approved of) claimed by interactants" (61). The other type is called negative face, which is "the basic claim to territories, personal preserves, rights to non-distraction-i.e. to freedom of action and freedom from imposition" (61). Brown and Levinson claim that every competent full-fledged member of a community has face and those members cooperate with each other to maintain face during the communication. Moreover, when they encounter a face-threatening act (FTA), speakers generally try their best to maintain each other's face. Closing conversations can be considered as a FTA because a speaker who wants to finish the conversation threatens the other's positive face. Therefore, it is crucial for him or her to maintain the other's face while working toward finishing the conversation according to certain social norms.

As other speech acts like requests, compliments, and refusals are studied from the perspectives of social norms of interaction as well as grammatical rules of the language, parting and closing the telephone conversations are also studied by many researchers (Clark and French 1981; Schegloff and Sacks 1973; Halmari 1993; Hartford and Bardovi-Harlig 1992; Kumatoridani 1992; Kipers 1984; Tanaka 1982; Okamoto 1990). One of the pioneering studies is conducted by Schegloff and Sacks (1973), which examines American English closing from natural telephone conversation data and provides a sequential organization of closing patterns.

Further studies in American English (Hartford and Bardovi-Harlig 1992, on closing in the academic advising session; Clark and French 1981, on closing of the telephone inquiries to a university switchboard operators; and Kipers 1984, on closing of service encounters) find that people use different strategies in the closing, depending on the situation. These studies also suggest that closings can vary according to the situation even in the same language. One way that closing can vary is according to the relationships of

people. Wolfson (1988; 1989) proposes the "bulge theory," which claims that the social distance between interlocutors can affect people's speech behavior. The concept of the "bulge theory" is that in certain speech acts such as compliments and invitations, there are qualitative similarities in speech behavior among the following categories of relationships: "intimates," "status un-equals," and "strangers," on one hand, and "non-intimates," "status-equals friends," and "acquaintances," on the other hand (1989:129). The reason why the two extremes on the scale of social distance —intimates and strangers— have similarities in their interactional style is because these extremes have relative stability in their relationships. That is, in the extreme relationships on the scale of social distance, it is easy for people to expect what to do in the conversation since they do not have to negotiate their relationships. On the other hand, in uncertain relationships like non-intimates and acquaintances, people become more sensitive in speaking behaviors such that they have built more solidarity and better relationships. Wolfson, et al. (1983) argues that the "bulge theory" is also applied to parting (cited in Wolfson 1989). The sequences of parting among people who have stable and fixed relationships are similar, and it is different for people who are not in such relationships including friends and acquaintances. In a study on parting presented in a seminar, Kipers states that friends and acquaintances who have no plans for specific future contact particularly show their interest for the reassurance of the relationship in parting (1983 cited in the Wolfson, 1989). Kipers states:

> Mean number of turns in these partings was the highest of any group in this study. Individual utterances were notably longer too...the lengthy negotiations over future meeting time reassure both participants that even though they may not designate a definite time when they will see one another again, they both value the relationship enough to want it to continue (132).

Furthermore, studies on the closing from different languages and/or different cultures show that partings are cross-culturally different. Tanaka (1982), for example, finds differences between American and Japanese parting, including non-verbal differences such as nodding, distance of speakers, and verbal difference with regard to types of expressions used in the closing section. For example, American speakers express joy of meeting more than Japanese speakers do. Telephone conversations, in particular, would reveal this verbal difference between Americans and Japanese since there are no visual cues.

As for Japanese telephone closings, Okamoto (1990) studies the closing conversations exchanged by Japanese native speakers and illustrates how they have different aspects from the ones of English speakers by comparing the

findings from Schegloff and Sacks (1973) and Clark and French (1981). Okamoto finds that there are four major differences between Japanese and English telephone conversations. The first difference concerns using a punch line as an initial closing sequence in Japanese. Japanese speakers use punch lines—more humor or jokes— to start the closing section. The second difference concerns giving a message. Japanese speakers relay messages such as "please say hello to your family member" which is not seen in English data. The third concerns expressing joy. English speakers often express their joy about engaging in the conversation, such as " it was a pleasure to talk to you, "while no Japanese speakers used this type of expression in Okamoto's data. The fourth concerns using "sayonara" or "good-bye." Japanese people do not use "sayonara" whereas English speakers usually use the equivalent "good bye" as the terminal exchange.

Okamoto's study provides a list of the characteristic features of Japanese telephone closing and offers insight into cross-cultural differences between Japanese and English speakers. It does not, however, illustrate how Japanese telephone closings are actually exchanged for two reasons. One reason is that Okamoto does not present any detailed information about the data that she collected. She merely mentions that she set up the recording devices at seven Japanese houses for two months in total and collected the interactions; she does not explain how many interactions were collected, under what conditions the interactions were made, nor the relationships of the participants of the conversations. These factors are important to take into consideration since closing can vary according to these factors. Moreover, although Okamoto presents the structural constituents that are used in the closing section in her data analysis, she does not provide any quantitative analysis of them.

These findings confirm the notion that people in a speech community share not only the grammatical rules of the shared language but also the social norms of the interaction (Gumperz 1972). In other words, people have the knowledge of what is appropriate to say or not to say as well as the well-formedness of the rules of the language. They acquire the communicative competence "... as to when to speak, when not, and as to what to talk about with whom, when, where, in what manner" (Hymes 1972:277). Since the norms of interaction vary in every context and, moreover, are often shared unconsciously and implicitly by members of the same speech community, this competence is likely to be difficult for non-native speakers to acquire. Thus, when these rules are broken, people often misinterpret the violation as unfriendliness, coldness, or over familiarity (Wolfson 1983a). Therefore, it is extremely important for people outside of the speech community to acquire this competence if they want to communicate appropriately and be perceived as a part of the target language community. Accordingly, it is crucial for language learners to learn the norms of speaking in the target language and its community (Wolfson 1989).

Wolfson (1983b) even recommends further empirical studies, pointing out that many teaching materials have presented the norms of interactions with

only intuitive limited knowledge. With regard to the closing section in the teaching materials, Horiguchi (1997) examines several Japanese language textbooks and discusses their example dialogues. She also claims that some closings presented in those textbooks are not necessarily the same as those found in the natural setting because the pedagogical focus may be different. Furthermore, she mentions that many of the closing sections presented are relatively short and simple; there are not many examples of relatively long closing sections exchanged by acquaintances.

With this need for empirical research of Japanese closing, this study examines how telephone closings are realized between the intimates in the Japanese language. The study attempts to illustrate the norms of Japanese telephone closing, which can be applied in Japanese language teaching and learning.

Features of Japanese Telephone Closing

Closing the telephone conversation is realized by cooperation from both speakers. Schegloff and Sacks (1973) explore conversation closing including telephone talk and claim that when closing the conversation, both interlocutors understand the speech completion and work to finish the conversation. According to Schegloff and Sacks (1973), there are three phases in terms of structure of the closing section: namely, 1) pre-closing, 2) terminal exchange, and 3) leave-taking.

Pre-closing

Pre-closing is the part in which one of the interlocutors cues a signal to initiate a closing section and the other agrees to it. For example, Sacks and Schegloff (1973) find that "We-ell," "O.K...," and "So-oo" are exchanged by both interlocutors without making coherent remarks to what they are talking about or introducing new topics. This type of exchange is called a "pass" because it "...indicate(s) that [the speaker] has not now anything more or new to say, and also to give a 'free' turn to a next" (304). And by employing the pass, the interlocutors understand that they both agree to work to close the conversation.

Terminal exchange

The other essential phase of the closing is the "terminal exchange." It is the last exchange before hanging up and it is the part in which the action of finishing the conversation is actually realized. If the pre-closing is properly exchanged, Schegloff and Sacks (1973) state, a simple exchanging of "goodbyes" following is possible.

In order to study pre-closing and terminal exchanges, examining adjacency pairs seems very important. An adjacency pair is defined as "a sequence of two related utterances by two different speakers" (Richards et al.

1992). In the pre-closing, for example, when one speaker shows a signal of closing by saying "O.K...," the other agrees to it by responding to it and passing "O.K...." In the terminal exchange, for example, one person says "Bye bye," and then the other responds to it by saying "Bye." In these adjacency pairs, the first speaker gives a parting and the second speaker also returns a parting. This assumes that the second speaker understands the first speaker's intention and agrees to close the conversation. In this way, two speakers exchange good-byes. In other words, a speaker says the first utterance and the other speaker responds to it, displaying that " ...he understood what a prior aimed at, and that he is willing to go along with it" (Schegloff and Sacks 1973:297).

Leave-taking

Although pre-closing and terminal exchange form the essential part of the closing section, as many researchers including Schegloff and Sacks (1973) state that closing the conversation is not so simple in real life. Actual closing includes several moves between pre-closing and terminal exchanges and in this paper; this in-between part is defined as the "leave-taking" phase. Since closing means parting as an FTA, interlocutors use different strategies to maintain each other's face and reassure their relationships. Schegloff and Sacks (1973) find in their English telephone closings that moves such as "making arrangements" a "reinvocation of certain sorts of materials talked of earlier in the conversation" are exchanged in the leave-taking phase (317).

The Study

The following study examines Japanese telephone closings in order to answer the following research question: How are Japanese telephone closings realized between intimates with regard to pre-closing, terminal exchange, and leave-taking?

Participants

With regard to the fifteen interactions examined for this study, the participants are all Japanese native speakers; however, age, sex, and social backgrounds vary, and there is no information collected in terms of relationships of the interlocutors of each telephone interaction. However, it is inferred that the interlocutors in most conversation are in close relationships. This inference is based upon by the content of the telephone calls. Native Japanese participants telephoning from the USA know that they can call anyone overseas (mostly in Japan) free of charge, but they need to talk for fifteen minutes. Therefore, one can speculate that they probably called someone with whom they would feel comfortable speaking. Some information such as marital status, or interlocutors' shared experience can be incidentally obtained by simply listening to each conversation. Another means is examining how the interlocutors address

each other. Calling the other person such as Mom, and Auntie provides relatively clear-cut deductions concerning the relationship between interlocutors. Using a specific suffix attached to people's names or even not using it also provides additional insight into the interlocutors' relationships. For example, common suffixes such as san and chan are explained by Koyama (1992). San is a "... general suffix which is used regardless of sex and marital status. It can be added to either the family name or the first name, the former conveying a sense of greater formality" (46). Chan is "a suffix that expresses intimacy. It is generally used when addressing children or people with whom the speaker is on intimate terms, especially if that person is younger" (46). Furthermore, as observed by Maynard (1997), linguistic analysis of stylistic choice of language through examination of verbal endings provides yet another approach to determine the speakers' relationships. There are two styles—"formal" and "informal" — in the verbal strategies to see the relationships of interlocutors; formal style, employing "desu/masu" ending is used when people are "in formal, institutional, and official situations," and informal style is "...used among social equals. Extremely casual style is reserved for close friends" (Maynard 1997:59). In the fifteen interactions examined in this study, all participants used casual, informal styles except for one.

Data collection

For this study, data were collected from the Linguistic Data Consortium (LDC)[1] at the University of Pennsylvania. The data were gathered by native speakers of Japanese living in the USA calling another native Japanese speaker overseas (mostly in Japan). The international phone calls that a participant made were automatically audiotaped by using the devices prepared by LDC. Since the original purpose of this data collection at LDC was simply to collect native Japanese speaker's samples, there were no restrictions concerning whom to call, as long as the participants called a native speaker of Japanese. Also, LDC did not obtain the demographic information on the participants.

Out of a 120-member corpus collected at LDC, fifteen interactions are used for this study on closing the telephone conversation. The fifteen interactions selected were the only interactions that ended within the designated time. The majority of telephone calls collected did not finish within the time; therefore, they did not contain the whole closing section in the data. The participants were originally told that they should talk to other participants for fifteen minutes on the phone free of charge because of the research purpose, and the conversation would be automatically recorded. However, even after fifteen minutes, there was no signal that participants recieved in order to stop the

[1] The Linguistic Data Consortium at the University of Pennsylvania (Director: Mr. Christopher Chieri) was founded in 1992 in order to provide a large-scale resource for research in linguistic technologies such as speech recognition and understanding, machine translation and so forth. The LDC collected corpus of telephone speech in many different languages including Japanese.

conversation. Consequently, most of the conversation extended longer than thirty minutes, which is the maximum of recording time for each, and therefore, the majority of the conversation in the corpus at LDC did not include the whole closing section.

The duration of the average phone call examined in this study was about thirty minutes. In order to examine the closing section, the last five minutes of the conversation was transcribed and analyzed.

Data analysis

This paper examines the three phases – pre-closing, terminal exchange, and leave-taking – to analyze the closing section. Although these three phases may not always be clearly exclusive, this study examines each of the three as a separate entity in order to see how each particular part is realized in the Japanese telephone closing. The following example in Table 1 marks the three phases, using one of the interactions collected for this study.

Table 1. Sample of Interaction with Three Phases Analysis

Line	Phase	Speaker	Interaction	Constituents
1	Pre-closing	F1	*Jaane* (Well, then.)	
2		F2	*Un, jaane* (Yes, well then.)	
3	Leave taking	F1	*Imakara derukara* (because I have to go now)	external circumstances
4		F2	*Un* (Yes)	
5		F1	*Hai, ja kiwo tsukete* (Yes, then, be careful.)	wishing health
6		F2	*Un bai bai* (Yes, bye bye)	good bye
7		F1	*Mata denwa suruyo, kocchikara* (I will call you again)	promise of future contact
8	terminal exchange	F2	*Un, jaane* (Yes, see you)	
9		F1	*Hai* (Yes)	

In this interaction, pre-closing is realized by one speaker giving a signal, saying "Jaane" (well then) (line 1) and the other speaker showing the agreement (line 2). Terminal exchange is achieved by one speaker saying "Un, jaane" (Yes, see you) (line 8) and the other answering "hai" (yes)(line 9). Both pre-closing and terminal exchange accord with the claims of Schegloff and Sacks (1973). In the leave-taking part, speakers exchange four moves including external circumstances, wishing health, goodbye, and promise of future contact.

In order to investigate further what kinds of constituents are used in the closing section, the structural elements that Okamoto (1990) provides are employed in this study as well. Figure 1 presents a summary.[2]

Figure 1. Constituents Used in the Closing Section

(1) Using summary expression such as "well, that's about it, "

(2) Summarizing the content of the conversation that the speakers had

(3) Expressing result of the conversation

(4) Confirming the actions brought about from the conversation such as "well then, I will give a call, "

(5) Talking about the topics they previously talked about in the begin ning of the conversation, such as "what were you doing?" and explaining the reason of the phone call,

(6) Using the punch line—using the humor and joke

(7) Talking about the external circumstances such as "it is getting late now," or "I have to go shopping."

(8) Promising future contact such as "I will call you again,"

(9) Expressing gratitude / apology such as " thank you for calling,"

(10) Wishing health and good luck such as " please take good care,"

(11) Relaying a message such as " please say hello to your husband, "

(12) Expressing goodbye such as "bye."

(148-149)

It is very important to note that this study only employs these particular structural elements listed above for the purpose of investigating which types are used in each of the three phases — pre-closing, terminal exchange, and leave-taking — of the closing section. There are several differences including the definition of key words and the analysis between this study and Okamoto's; therefore, it needs to be understood that the present study does not adopt all

[2] Okamoto's paper is written in Japanese; a translated summary of Okamoto's findings are presented here.

of Okamoto's investigation. For example, Okamoto considers only two phases—pre-closing and leave-taking — in the closing section; the terminal exchange is subsumed into the leave-taking part. The present study, however, considers the three different phases as already discussed. Okamoto categorizes constituents from (1) to (6) in Figure 1 above as pre-closing strategies and from (7) to (12) as leave-taking strategies. Although Okamoto admits that the strategy of leave-taking can be used as a pre-closing strategy and visa-versa, it is difficult to make a clear division between pre-closing and leave-taking. For the sake of simplicity, therefore, the present study does not take those categories for the constituents themselves and simply uses the constituents in order to see what types are used in each of the three phases.

Results

The results of this study reveal that there are frequently used patterns in each of the three phases –pre-closing, terminal exchange, and leave-taking. Moreover, there are strategies employed in the three phases that stand out notably.

Pre-closing

Two types of initial sequence that are frequently found for the pre-closing include mentioning the external factors to hang up the telephone and talking about future contact. Mentioning external factors such as time or the reason for having to hang up the phone is the most common. Most conversations—eleven out of fifteen closings—employ this pre-closing strategy, using expressions like "Did we spend 15 minutes already?" These behaviors of the speakers also seem to have been affected to some extent by their knowledge that they were participating in an experiment. Examples in which the speaker mentions the reason for ending the conversation includes "Jaasa, sorosoro gohan no shitaku mo surushi" (well then, it is about the time when I prepare the meal.). One interaction uses both summary expression and time in one utterance: "Ja, soiu kotode, mou 30pun tattanja naikana." (Well, that is about it. I wonder we have been talking for thirty minutes). Promising future contact such as "Jaasa, renraku surukarasa" (well then, I will contact you), and "Maasa, Nihon ni kaettara aerukarasa" (well, when I returning to Japan, we can see each other) are less frequently used as pre-closing, employed only in three interactions. These cues do not explicitly designate a definite time, but simply express the interlocutors' interest in future contact. In addition, cue words that can be considered as semi-equivalent to the English pre-closing signal such as "We-ell," "O.K...," and "So-oo" claimed by Schegloff and Sacks (1973) are notably found in this study. Several interlocutors initiate the pre-closing, starting with "ja," "jaa," and "jaasa" (well

then).

Terminal exchange

In order to understand the terminal goodbye exchange, the very last goodbye adjacency pair is examined. Table 2 below presents the total number used in the last dyad. Thirty expressions in total out of fifteen interactions are listed since each adjacency pair consists of two utterances; one is made by the first speaker and the other is a response made by the second speaker.

Table 2. Expressions used in the Last Adjacency Pair

Words used in the last adjacency pair	Utterances
(1) *Oyasumi/ Oyasuminasai* (good night)	7
(2) *Jaane* (see you)	7
(3) *Bai bai* (bye bye)	7
(4) *Gomen kudasai* (excuse me for leaving)	2
(5) *Sayonara* (good bye)	2
(6) *Matane* (see you again)	1
(7) *Shitrurei shimasu* (lit. I commit my rudeness to leave)	1
(8) *Hai* (yes)	3

"Bai bai" (bye bye), "Jaane" (see you)," and "Oyasumi" (good night) are frequently used as terminal exchanges. "Bai bai" (bye bye) is originally from English words, but commonly used as a casual terminal exchange in Japanese. "Jaane" (see you) and its very similar expression "matane" (see you again) are also found. Both "jaane" and "matane" are informal expressions and implicitly include the intention of contacting another time; however, their intention is very similar with its English equivalent "see you again," which is not making a specific arrangement to meet, but used as a goodbye. All of these—"Bai bai" (bye bye), "Jaane" (see you), and "matane" (see you again)—are commonly used as goodbye words between people who are close to each other.

" Oyasumi" (good night) and the more formal "oyasumi nasai" (good night) are employed often as well. Considering the fact that there is a large time difference between Japan and the US, the phone calls were made when only one of the participants was talking at night. "Oyasuminasai" literally means "sleep well" and is often used as a parting word at night in the Japanese language just as "good night" is used in American English (Miura 1990).

Less frequently though, "gomenkudasai" (excuse me for leaving) and "shitsurei shimasu" (lit. I commit my rudeness to leave) are used. It is also common to use these expressions for goodbye; however, these two words are more formally compared with the aforementioned expressions. Furthermore,

the word " sayonara" is not often used in the interaction in this study and it is in accord with Okamoto's findings (1990).

Very frequently, people use the same expression, such as "bye" and "good night" using exactly the same wording found (ten interactions). In other words, people exchange the same expression such as "bye" and "bye," and "good night" and "good night" in the terminal exchange. However, there are three examples of "hai" (yes) as a part of the last goodbye adjacency pair. "Hai" literally means "yes" in English and in daily conversation, and "hai" would function as an answer to the question. However, in the closing section, "hai" is used in the second of the parting adjacency pair and implies an acceptance of the word goodbye.

Leave-taking

All of the fifteen interactions include leave-taking; however, the number of exchanges varies depending on the conversation. For example, interlocutors who suddenly notice that they speak longer than fifteen minutes decide to hang up the telephone and immediately exchange only one move in the leave-taking. On the other hand, two interactions include seven moves in leave-taking. In the fifteen interactions, the average number of moves is 3.6.

There are four important moves exchanged very frequently between preclosing and terminal exchange in the closing section: (1) wishing each other's health and happiness; (2) promise of future contact; (3) message; and (4) gratitude or apology. In addition, the repetitions of these moves are also very often found.

First, wishing each other's health and happiness is most often employed in twelve interactions. Expressing good wishes is made in three major expressions: "Kiwo tsuketene" (take care of your health), "genkide" (I wish you stay healthy), and "ganbatte" (good luck/do your best). Both "kiwo tsuketene" (take care of your health) and "genkide" (I wish you stay healthy) emphasize that the speakers wish for the other's health. "Ganbatte" (good luck) appears when people are talking about their troubles during the conversation. For example, a mother employs one of these expressions to a daughter who is talking about the trouble in her life in America.

Second, promising future contact is seen very often as well; ten interactions include promising future contact. Future contact includes both specific contact and non-specific contact. Specific contact is the case in which both speakers work to arrange the next contact. There is only one case found where speakers (a husband and a wife) talk specifically about who will write a letter next time and how often they should talk on the phone. In all other cases, however, future contacts are not arranged in detail but rather are just mentioned, such as "Mata zettai aouyo" (Let's meet again definitely), "Mata renrakusurukara sa" (I will contact you again), and "Kondo misete morau wa" (I will see the stuff you are talking about next time). The use of the words "mata" (again) and "kondo" (next time) are not explicitly made clear as to

when exactly the time of future contact will occur.

Third, giving the message is also often found; eight conversations contain it. It is performed using the expression "—san ni (mo) yoroshiku" (Please say hello to—). Mostly speakers express hello to the other speakers' family members. Frequent use of giving a message is consistent with the findings of Okamoto, who claims that this feature in Japanese closing is different from English.

Fourth, several expressions of gratitude or apology are employed. Gratitude is expressed straightforwardly by saying "arigato" (thank you) and "domo arigato" (thank you very much). Both callers and receivers of the telephone calls express thanks. A caller thanks for cooperating for participating in the research and/or talking with him/her. A receiver of the call thanks the other for calling. Also there is thanking about specifically what participants previously talked about. For example "iroiro okuttekurete arigato" (thank you for sending me various things) referring to the topics which participants previously talked about. This type of thanking shows the appreciation of what the other participant will do for her in the closing section again. Apology is found less often than gratitude. Two interactions include apology, expressed by saying "gomen ne" (I am sorry), and both of them concern the telephone call. One apology is made by a caller whose phone call woke the other interlocutor up. Another is made by a speaker who has to go to a party and needs to hang up the phone very soon. Also this study finds the repetition of gratitude /apology, consistent with the findings of Okamoto's study (1990). Furthermore, repetitions of other constituents, besides the use of gratitude or apology, are also seen in the data: the repetitions of constituents including promising future contact (three interactions), wishing each other's health and happiness (two interactions), and exchange of goodbyes (ten interactions). One interaction is best exemplified by Table 3.

Table 3. Sample Interaction

Line	Phase	Speaker	Interaction	Constituents
1	Pre-closing	F1	*Ja, souiukoto. Atashi moshikashite, hachijini moushitani ikanakya ikenainda* (well, that is about it. I may have to go at 8 o'clock.)	external circumstances
2		F2	*A, hontoni* (ah, really)	
3	Leave taking	F1	*Un, jaane* (yes, see you)	good bye
4		F2	*(2.1) Jaa, matane.* (well, see you again)	
5		F1	*Matane* (see you again)	good bye
6		F2	*Un* (Yes)	
7		F1	*honto, gomenne* (truly, I am sorry)	apology
8		F2	*uun, ja, bai bai* (no, well, bye bye)	good bye
9		F1	*Baibai* (bye bye)	
10		F2	*(2.2) tanoshinde kitene* (have a good time)	wish
11		F1	*Hai* (yes)	
12	Terminal exchange	F2	*Bai bai* (bye bye)	good bye
13		F1	*Bai bai* (bye bye)	

One of the interlocutors, F1, initiates pre-closing with external circumstances (see line 1-2) and the other, F2 agrees (line 2). In the above leaving-taking, F1 uses the goodbye words, "jaane" (see you) (line 3) and F2 responds with goodbye words, "Ja, matane" (well, see you again) as well. Although F1 might have been able to finish their conversation there, F1 responds to F2, saying "matane" (see you again) (line 5), and F2 accepts F1's goodbye with "un" (yes) (line 6). Then again, F1 might have been able to finish their conversation there; however, she continues to talk. F1 expresses an apology (line 8) and F2 returns good bye again (line 8). Then F1 returns goodbye again (line 9), but the conversation still goes on. F2 expresses wishes "tanoshinde kitene" (have a good time) (line10) and F1 accepts them. After these repetitions, they finally reach the final adjacency pair saying "bai bai" (bye bye) (line12 –13).

Discussion

This study offers two sets of findings with regard to the Japanese telephone closing performed by speakers in close relationships. First, the three features of Japanese telephone closing— leave-taking, pre-closing and terminal exchange— represent key phases in the closing process. Second, in all the phases, speakers seem to cooperate not only to finish the conversation but also not to threaten each other's face.

The results of this study suggest that closing a telephone conversation is indeed a delicate and complicated process even to speakers in close relationships. Closing can be achieved by only pre-closing and terminal exchange; yet leave-taking is optional. However, from the point of norms of interaction, leave-taking is as important as the other two phases. Leave-taking is an important step in which interlocutors confirm that they are both working to finish the conversation and to reassure their continuing relationships. Leave-taking tends to occupy a large space in the closing section since it frequently includes a few different moves and repetitions. Repeating goodbyes, which is remarkably often employed, especially seems to have the effect that the speakers confirm to each other that they do not have something new to talk about and understand that they are working together toward the end of the conversation. In addition, these repetitions seem to have the effect of reassuring their relationships. In her study of repetition, Tannen (1989) states, "[Repetition] ...provides a resource to keep talking going, where talk itself is a show of involvement, of a willingness to interact, to serve positive face" (52). Repetition in the closing section, therefore, serves as an effective way to show that speakers do not have additional topics to talk about and that speakers care about their relationships. It is interesting to note that most of the telephone conversations studied here involve participants who are intimates to each other. Even between participants who are intimates to each other, speakers have intricate telephone closings using several types of moves and their repetitions. Thus, it would seem that the use of these constituents along with their repetitions in the closing section helps speakers confirm that they are working to finish the telephone conversation and emphasizes the reassurance of their relationships.

Although many researchers such as Schegloff and Sacks (1972) and Okamoto (1990) agree that leave-taking serves the function of reassurance of interlocutors' relationships, they do not extend this concept to apply to pre-closing and terminal exchange. The analysis of this study, however, suggests that pre-closing and terminal exchange also share this function. Providing external factors explicitly as a pre-closing, for example, seems to be effective in order not to threaten each other's face since interlocutors are giving a legitimate reason that the participants have to finish their conversations soon, not that they want to finish it. The usage of the expression of future contact as pre-closing can be explained by considering two interpretations. First, the speakers can infer that they are ready to finish their conver-

sation this time by promising future contact. Secondly, the speakers can show that they care about their relationships and want to continue. This is consistent with the notion of the reassurance about their relationships. With regard to closing signal "ja," Kumatoridani (1992) argues that "ja" is frequently used in the Japanese telephone closing and examines its functions. He states that one of the main functions is transition; "ja" can stop a current topic/utterances and lead to the next topic/utterances. In the present study, "ja" (well then) expressions are frequently followed by other pre-closing strategies; therefore, it seems to be a verbal bridge leading to other pre-closing strategies. Employing the "ja" expression might be particularly effective in pre-closing since it avoids the abrupt change toward the closing of the conversation.

Analysis of terminal exchange also seems to indicate interlocutors' reassurance of relationships. On top of actually finishing the conversation, employing exactly the same words in the terminal exchange and preferable use of "jaane" (see you) and "matane" (see you again) over "sayonara" (goodbye) seem to manifest the speakers' effort for the reassurance of relationships. In Okamoto (1990)'s discussion that Japanese people do not often use "sayonara" in the telephone closing, whereas English speakers usually use it as the terminal exchange, she explains that English "good-bye" connotes a measure of reassurance of the relationships in its word origin; however, Japanese sayonara does not have such a connotation and simply means parting. It is interesting to speculate, based on Okamoto's view, that the choice of terminal words might be influenced by the concept of reassurance of the relationships; words such as "jaane (see you)"and "matane (see you again)" are often used because they include the connotation of continuation of the relationships. Moreover, using "hai" (yes) in the terminal exchange can be added to the list of different features between Japanese and English closing. Kumatoridani (1992) investigates frequent use of "hai" in the whole closing section of the Japanese telephone conversation and he claims that "hai" functions to finish the discourse by displaying that the interlocutors do not have anything to add and accept the previous utterance. Therefore, this study also confirms that it is not uncommon that "hai" becomes the last utterance of the terminal adjacency pair.

Limitation of the study

The findings in this study need to be carefully interpreted before generalizing to the norms of Japanese telephone closing. The data analyzed in this study is solely between Japanese native speakers living in the United States and another speaker living in Japan. It is extremely important to note that these exchanges are mainly performed between friends, families, and people who are relatively close to each other since relationships between interlocutors are important factors for determining closing variations.

Furthermore, the research has some limitations. One is the small sample

size of data. Fifteen interactions may not be enough to illustrate the norms of any particular speech act. In addition, demographic factors of the participants such as sex, age, and social background are not controlled. A further study with a larger sample and more controlled demographic factors of participants is required to ensure the findings of this study. Moreover, there may be an effect of tape recording on the telephone conversation. Since the participants were aware of being recorded and were told that they had to finish the conversations in fifteen minutes, these experimental factors might affect their conversational style and the closings may differ from the ones in natural conversation. However, Wolfson states it seems that tape-recording of a group of people, rather than, an individual, would divert interlocutors' attention away from the state of being recorded since interlocutors "...who normally interact socially are brought together and tape recorded while in the process of interacting with each other" (1976:199). Therefore, although the effect of tape-recording certainly cannot be denied, it is hoped that the interactions examined in this study offer legitimate data to study Japanese telephone closing. Furthermore, as Wolfson (1983b) claims, an empirically based analysis on the norms of interaction would be beneficial especially for language teachers and learners since those norms are very often unconsciously and intuitively shared by native speakers of the target language.

Further research and educational purposes

Although only preliminary, this study attempts to examine the norms of Japanese closing in one particular setting. The study suggests that closing the conversation is crucial speech behavior for language teaching and learning since speakers always must finish the conversation; however, it can be a very complicated and delicate task. The norms of interaction in the closing reflect not only speakers' cooperation to simply finish the conversation but also confirm their relationships. Understanding this notion may allow language teachers to raise the awareness of these features in their learners. The quantitative analysis presented in this study may be helpful in providing Japanese textbook publishers, language teachers, and language learners with ins insight and ideas concerning how to prioritize types of expressions to learn in closing telephone conversations in Japanese.

This study encourages more empirical studies of closing performed by native Japanese speakers in different situations and involving different relationships between interlocutors. The collections of these studies will allow research to provide more insight on closing and will be helpful for language learners to learn norms of closing interactions shared by native speakers of Japanese. In this way, the learners will be able to communicate appropriately with the native speakers in the target language.

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